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Chapter 1

Business Communication Soft Skills

True/False Questions

1. Your ability to communicate is central to your self-concept.
True; Easy
2. Active listening and reading are also part of being a successful communicator.
True; Easy
3. Though appreciated, communication skills do not feature among the top ten desirable skills employers look for.
False; Easy
4. To communicate is to perceive, to interpret, and to relate our perception and interpretation to what we already know.
False; Moderate
5. Process means doing something together with one or more other people.
False; Easy
6. The source imagines, creates, and sends the message.
True; Easy
7. As the amount of feedback increases, the accuracy of communication also increases.
True; Easy
8. The environment is composed of the physical and psychological atmosphere.
True; Easy
9. Because noise interferes with the communication process, all noise is bad.
False; Moderate
10. Meaning is what we share through communication.
True; Easy
11. The degree to which you consider both the common good and fundamental principles you hold to be true when crafting your message directly relates to how your message will affect others.
True; Easy
12. To communicate in an egalitarian manner, one must speak and write in a way that is comprehensible and relevant to those who are “like you” in terms of age, gender, race or ethnicity, or other characteristics.
False; Moderate
13. Being egalitarian means that you have to avoid professional terminology.
False; Moderate
14. Being manipulative is one of the ways the speaker exhibits his respect for the audience.
False; Moderate

15. In order to be respectful, one has to keep passion and enthusiasm out of business communication.
False; Moderate
16. “I don’t understand how you could have trouble with the product you bought. Try it again.”—is an example of respectful communication.
False; Moderate
17. Paying attention to both the actual words and for other clues to meaning, such as tone of voice, is an example of passive listening.
False; Easy

Multiple Choice Questions

1. _____ refers to your sense of self and awareness of who you are.
1. Intuition
 2. Self-awareness
 3. Self-concept
 4. Introspection
 5. Self-perception
- c; Moderate**
2. Megan was assessing her career options before she decided to take up a course on her skills. She realized that she was happy talking to people and helping them out; this could help her in a customer facing job. What Megan was trying to realize was her _____.
1. sixth sense
 2. subconscious drive
 3. character
 4. personality type
 5. self-concept
- e; Moderate**
3. Which of the following does not reflect one’s self-concept?
1. parents
 2. clothes
 3. friends
 4. professional choice
 5. interests
- a; Moderate**
4. Which of the following is not true about communication?
1. It influences your thinking about yourself and others.
 2. It influences how you learn.
 3. It represents you and your employer.
 4. It is desired by business and industry.
 5. It reflects your socio-economic background.
- e; Moderate**

5. The study mentioned in the text found that _____ is both a “marker” of high-skill, high-wage, professional work, and a ‘gatekeeper’ with clear equity implications.
1. speaking
 2. education
 3. reading
 4. writing
 5. ethics

d; Moderate

6. Which of the following is not a critical term in the definition of communication?
1. process
 2. understanding
 3. status
 4. sharing
 5. meaning

c; Moderate

7. Fred is narrating his idea to his supervisor on how to improve the quality of the work in his department. Priscilla, his supervisor, listens intently, perceives his point of view, interprets his suggestions, and relates the interpretation to her own idea of quality improvement. What is Priscilla doing?
1. reviewing
 2. understanding
 3. providing feedback
 4. moderating
 5. quantifying

b; Moderate

8. In communication, _____ occurs when you convey thoughts, feelings, ideas, or insights to others.
1. reviewing
 2. understanding
 3. feedback
 4. sharing
 5. moderating

d; Moderate

9. _____ is composed of messages the receiver sends back to the source.
1. Medium
 2. Feedback
 3. Channel
 4. Reverse communication
 5. Meaning

b; Moderate

10. Sheila is delivering a message to her colleagues. She ensures that there are no unintended messages in her tone of voice, body language, or clothing. She chooses the perfect words to convey the intended meaning. By watching her audience’s reaction, she perceives how well they received the message, and responds with clarification or supporting information. Sheila is the _____ of the message.
1. medium

2. context
3. intermediary
4. channel
5. source

e; Moderate

11. Face-to-face conversations, speeches, telephone conversations, voice mail messages, radio, and public address systems are examples of
1. messages.
 2. contexts.
 3. channels.
 4. receivers.
 5. sources.

c; Moderate

12. Which of the following statements about feedback is not true?
1. It provides an opportunity for the source to ask for clarification.
 2. It can indicate that the source could make the message more interesting.
 3. As the amount of feedback increases, the accuracy of communication also increases.
 4. It signals the source to see how well the message was received.
 5. It is composed of messages the receiver sends back to the source.

a; Moderate

13. Which of the following statements about environment is not true?
1. People may be less likely to have an intimate conversation when they can only see each other from across the room.
 2. The environment can include the tables, chairs, lighting, and sound equipment that are in the room.
 3. The environment can include factors like formal dress.
 4. People may be more likely to have an intimate conversation when they are physically close to each other.
 5. Expectations of the individuals involved are part of the environment.

e; Moderate

14. The _____ of the communication interaction involves the setting, scene, and expectations of the individuals involved.
1. context
 2. process
 3. medium
 4. channel
 5. environment

a; Moderate

15. _____ is anything that blocks or changes the source's intended meaning of the message.
1. Intervention
 2. Interruption
 3. Channel conflict
 4. Interference
 5. Distortion

d; Moderate

16. As you are talking to your colleague over the phone, the sound of an airplane flying low drowns out part of your conversation. Immediately after, your mobile phone rings, again disturbing the flow of conversation. Both of these are instances of
1. interference.
 2. interruption.
 3. distortion.
 4. environmental conflict.
 5. channel conflict.

a; Moderate

17. Your colleague, Narain Ramesh from India, finds it a bit strange that you refer to your teachers by name. He feels how you address someone reflects your respect for that person. But you are confident that your professors are comfortable with how you address them. From a communications perspective, the difference here is one of
- a. environment.
 - b. channel.
 - c. understanding.
 - d. context.
 - e. feedback.

d; Moderate

18. _____ is what happens when your own thoughts occupy your attention while you are hearing, or reading, a message.
- a. Unintentional distraction
 - b. Unconditional stimulation
 - c. Brain reflex
 - d. Reflective distortion
 - e. Psychological noise

e; Moderate

19. When you bring ideas to consciousness, ponder how you feel about something, or figure out the solution to a problem, what happens is referred to as
- a. intuition.
 - b. intrapersonal communication.
 - c. clustering illusion.
 - d. exposure effect.
 - e. reflective communication.

b; Moderate

20. While you are discussing a recent movie with a friend, he clarifies your descriptions, and throws in his opinion about what he thought about the movie. As a third person views it, both of you are taking the role of source and receiver throughout the conversation in turns. Which communication model explains the blurring of the distinction between you and your friend as the source and receiver?
- a. transactional model
 - b. transference model
 - c. cluster model
 - d. constructivist model
 - e. reflective model

a; Moderate

21. In which of the following communication models do we focus on the negotiated meaning, or common ground, when trying to describe communication?
- transactional model
 - transference model
 - cluster model
 - constructivist model
 - reflective model

d; Moderate

22. What is the critical difference between the following two interpersonal interactions: one with the cab-driver about the city roads and the other with your girlfriend about future plans?
- based on gender
 - length of conversation
 - level of intimacy
 - level of honesty
 - context of the communication

c; Moderate

23. When you are prepared, it means that you have done all of the following except:
- selected a topic appropriate to your audience
 - practiced the golden rule of treating your audience
 - gathered enough information to cover the topic well
 - put your information into a logical sequence
 - considered how best to present it

b; Moderate

24. As the business communicator's first responsibility, the various facets of preparation include all of the following except:
- feedback
 - organization
 - clarity
 - being concise
 - being punctual

a; Moderate

25. _____ refers to a set of principles or rules for correct conduct.

- Decorum
- Protocol
- Code of conduct
- Manners
- Ethics

e; Easy

26. When faced with a difficult situation with a customer, instead of saying "I've had it with your complaints!" Sue always says, "I'm having trouble seeing how I can fix this situation. Would you explain to me what you want to see happen?" In terms of responsibilities of a communicator, this is an example of
- marketing tactic.
 - ethical communication.
 - intrapersonal communication.
 - sales pitching.

5. effective feedback.

b; Moderate

27. To be _____ means that everyone is entitled to the same respect, expectations, access to information, and rewards of participation in a group.
1. organized
 2. neutral
 3. tolerant of diversity
 4. egalitarian
 5. ethical

d; Easy

28. People who believe whatever the speaker said simply because of how dramatically he or she delivered a speech are being manipulated by
- a. a cult of personality.
 - b. hypnotic suggestions.
 - c. false promises.
 - d. an autocratic leader.
 - e. impression management.

a; Easy

29. If you are asked a question to which you don't know the answer, the proper response should be:
- a. "I'm afraid I will not be able to answer your queries."
 - b. "Shall we keep the questions toward the end of the session?"
 - c. "I don't know the answer but I will research it and get back to you"
 - d. "This seems to digress from the topic in discussion."
 - e. "Questioners should ensure that they benefit the entire audience."

c; Easy

30. Our awareness and ability to control and express our emotions as we assess and manage our interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically is called
1. natural intelligence.
 2. native intelligence.
 3. adaptability intelligence.
 4. emotional intelligence.
 5. rational intelligence.

d; Easy

31. Our emotional intelligence involves which of the following?
1. self-disclosure
 2. selfishness
 3. group management
 4. self-awareness
 5. group-awareness

d; Easy

32. Which of the following is not one of the tips to facilitate active listening?
1. Maintain eye contact with the speaker.
 2. Don't interrupt; if reading, don't multitask.

3. Focus your attention on your own internal monologue.
4. Restate the message in your own words and ask if you understood correctly.
5. Ask clarifying questions to communicate interest and gain insight.

c; Moderate

Essay Questions

1. Other than written and oral, what are the other facets of communication?
You communicate your self-concept through various other means—your clothing, jewelry, automobiles, tattoos, music, gadgets, etc. Communication also helps you understand others by improving your listening skills. Active reading also helps us understand things better. Communication also helps us learn through improved conversation skills.
Moderate
2. Other than expressing yourself, how does communication help?
Communication skills help you to understand others—not just their words, but also their tone of voice and their nonverbal gestures, while the format of their written documents provide you with clues about who they are and what their values and priorities may be. Active listening and reading are also part of being a successful communicator.
Moderate
3. Define communication. What is the focus of the study of communication?
Communication is defined as the process of understanding and sharing meaning. The relationship that involves interaction between participants is the focus of the study of communication.
Easy
4. Describe understanding, sharing, and meaning.
To understand is to perceive, to interpret, and to relate our perception and interpretation to what we already know. Sharing means doing something together with one or more other people. Meaning is what we share through communication.
Moderate
5. What are the components of the communication process?
The communication process consists of source, message, channel, receiver, feedback, environment, context, and interference.
Moderate
6. What is the significance of feedback?
Feedback is composed of messages the receiver sends back to the source. Verbal or nonverbal signals allow the source to see how well the message was received. Feedback also provides an opportunity for the receiver or audience to ask for clarification, to agree or disagree, or to indicate that the source could make the message more interesting. As the amount of feedback increases, the accuracy of communication also increases.
Hard
7. What is the difference between environment and context?
The environment is the atmosphere, physical and psychological, where you send and receive messages. The environment can include the tables, chairs, lighting, and sound equipment that are in the room. The context of the communication interaction involves the setting, scene, and

expectations of the individuals involved. Context is all about what people expect from each other, and we often create those expectations out of environmental cues.

Hard

8. Differentiate between interference and psychological noise.
Interference is anything that blocks or changes the source's intended meaning of the message. Psychological noise is what happens when your own thoughts occupy your attention while you are hearing, or reading, a message.

Moderate

9. How does the transactional model view the communication process?
Rather than looking at the source sending a message and someone receiving it as two distinct acts, researchers often view communication as a transactional process with actions often happening at the same time. The distinction between source and receiver is blurred in conversational turn-taking.

Moderate

10. What is the role of the negotiated meaning?
According to the constructivist model, the focus is on the negotiated meaning, or common ground, when trying to describe communication. This is so as even if the two parties understand the language used, they might interpret it differently. Thus, negotiation is required to arrive at a common ground.

Hard

11. What does preparation signify?
Being prepared means that you have selected a topic appropriate to your audience, gathered enough information to cover the topic well, put your information into a logical sequence, and considered how best to present it.

Moderate

12. What are the key responsibilities to be organized in communication?
On any given topic there is a wealth of information. To organize the communication, your job is to narrow that content down to a manageable level, serving the role of gatekeeper by selecting some information and "de-selecting," or choosing to not include other points or ideas.

Moderate

13. What role does technology have in clarity of communication?
Technology plays a part in clarity; if you are using a microphone or conducting a teleconference, clarity will depend on this equipment functioning properly. In this case, in addition to preparing your speech, you need to prepare by testing the equipment ahead of time.

Moderate

14. What are the risks of not being concise?
By incorporating additional information into your document or speech, you run the risk of boring, confusing, or overloading your audience. Talking in circles or indulging in tangents, where you get off topic or go too deep, can hinder an audience's ability to grasp your message.

Moderate

15. Why is it important to be punctual in order to be concise?
To be concise, one has to prepare to be punctual. If you are asked to give a five-minute presentation at a meeting, your co-workers will not appreciate your taking fifteen minutes, any

more than your supervisor would appreciate your submitting a fifteen-page report when you were asked to write five pages. For oral presentations, time yourself when you rehearse and make sure you can deliver your message within the allotted number of minutes.

Moderate

16. Is being concise universally applicable?

Many non-Western cultures prefer a less-direct approach, where business communication often begins with social or general comments that an American audience might consider unnecessary. Some cultures also have a less-strict interpretation of time schedules and punctuality. While it is important to recognize that different cultures have different expectations, the general rule holds true that good business communication does not waste words or time.

Moderate

17. What does it mean to be egalitarian?

To be egalitarian is to believe in basic equality: that all people should share equally in the benefits and burdens of a society. It means that everyone is entitled to the same respect, expectations, access to information, and rewards of participation in a group.

Easy

18. What must one do in order to communicate in an egalitarian manner?

To communicate in an egalitarian manner, speak and write in a way that is comprehensible and relevant to all of your listeners or readers, not just those who are “like you” in terms of age, gender, race or ethnicity, or other characteristics. An egalitarian communicator seeks to unify the audience by using ideas and language that are appropriate for all the message’s readers or listeners.

Moderate

19. What is the role of passion and enthusiasm in business communication?

Passion and enthusiasm are very important in business communication. If your topic is worth writing or speaking about, make an effort to show your audience why it is worthwhile by speaking enthusiastically or using a dynamic writing style. However, the ethical communicator will be passionate and enthusiastic without being disrespectful.

Moderate

20. Describe one of the ways you can build trust.

There are many ways to build trust in communication. One way to do this is to begin your message by providing some information about your qualifications and background, your interest in the topic, or your reasons for communicating at this particular time.

Easy

21. Why is it important to build trust?

Your goal as a communicator is to build a healthy relationship with your audience, and to do that you must show them why they can trust you and why the information you are about to give them is believable. Your audience will expect that what you say is the truth as you understand it. This means that you have not intentionally omitted, deleted, or taken information out of context simply to prove your points.

Moderate

22. What is the “golden rule” in communication? What is its significance?

In communication, the “golden rule,” is to treat others the way you would like to be treated. Always remember how you would feel if you were on the receiving end of your communication,

and act accordingly. In all its many forms, the golden rule incorporates human kindness, cooperation, and reciprocity across cultures, languages, backgrounds, and interests.

Moderate

23. Is there any difference between hearing and listening?

In a discussion, although you may have heard the words, you may not have chosen to listen to them. Hearing means you heard words, but listening implies you actively chose to listen to the program, processing the sounds, following the thread of discussion, making it easier for you to recall.

Moderate

24. In communication, what is the significance of the Iceberg model?

When you see an iceberg in the ocean, the great majority of its size and depth lie below your level of awareness. When you write a document or give a presentation, each person in your reading or listening audience is like the tip of an iceberg. You may perceive people of different ages, races, ethnicities, and genders, but those are only surface characteristics. At first glance you may think you know your audience, but if you dig a little deeper you will learn more about them and become a better speaker.

Hard

25. What should you do to fully share and understand meaning when communicating?

Communication involves the sharing and understanding of meaning. To fully share and understand, practice active listening and reading so that you are fully attentive, fully present in the moment of interaction. Pay attention to both the actual words and for other clues to meaning, such as tone of voice or writing style. Look for opportunities for clarification and feedback when the time comes for you to respond, not before.

Moderate

Fill in the Blanks

1. _____ can be defined as the process of understanding and sharing meaning.
Communication; Easy
2. According to the text, the most time-honored form of communication is _____.
storytelling; Easy
3. In communication, _____ occurs when you convey thoughts, feelings, ideas, or insights to others.
sharing; Easy
4. The _____ is the stimulus or meaning produced by the source for the receiver or audience.
message; Easy
5. The _____ is the way in which a message or messages travel between source and receiver.
channel; Easy
6. When you respond to the source, intentionally or unintentionally, you are giving _____.
feedback; Easy

7. _____ is all about what people expect from each other, and we often create those expectations out of environmental cues.
Context; Easy
8. _____ interferes with normal encoding and decoding of the message carried by the channel between source and receiver.
Noise; Easy
9. When communication is viewed as a _____ process, the distinction between source and receiver is blurred in conversational turn-taking.
transactional; Hard
10. In the _____ model, the focus is on the negotiated meaning, or common ground, when trying to describe communication.
constructivist; Hard
11. In your responsibility as a communicator in an organizational context, the specific expectations may change given the context or environment, but two central ideas will remain: _____, and _____.
be prepared; be ethical; Easy
12. _____ means brief and to the point.
Concise; Moderate
13. Communicating _____ involves being egalitarian, respectful, and trustworthy.
ethically; Moderate
14. The word _____ comes from the root “equal.”
egalitarian; Easy
15. A(n) _____ communicator seeks to unify the audience by using ideas and language that are appropriate for all the message’s readers or listeners.
egalitarian; Easy
16. _____ listening refers to being fully attentive, fully present in the moment of interaction.
Active; Easy